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by Carla Bergstedt

Tony Freman and his wife sat in the living room watching the 5 o'clock news. Some of the news was depressing, but Tony didn't notice. He was happy about something else. He and his wife were going to have a baby.

Miles away another life was attempting to become. The genetic scientist Dr. Adams carefully measured a synthesis of proteins and DNA and placed them in an incubator lined with more proteins. The elements in this synthesis were known to be a part of the elements found in living organisms.

The living organism Tony snuggled deeper into the couch. His attention returned to the news.

"A tester study conducted by the government concluded that chemical exposures in the region may be linked with the high rate of observed chromosome damage. Residents are concerned with the increased rate of neo-plastic disease, spontaneous abortions, and infants with birth defects. These studies first began when the residents of this area noted the absence of insects in this region. An in-depth look at the long range effects of RDA and other chemicals will follow this news cast."

Tony turned to his wife. She looked well enough. The life inside her would be emerging any day now. He saw no evidence that the 90% water, 4% fats, 2% Sodium and 4% other chemicals also contained 0.6% PCB, 0.4% DDT and 0.1% RDA. To Tony his wife looked okay. Together they would have a family and perpetuate the species. But then there was the matter of the flies. Insects had disappeared in Tony's area too.

It was the disappearance of all the insects in a certain area which had given scientists Williams and Struthers a new project and a new job. They were to study the long term effects of exposure to the chemical RDA, a drug they had helped to discover. At the time the chemical was accepted immediately for its ability to defy chemical compositional changes. It lasted forever which made it useful. It lasted forever which made its wastes difficult to dispose of.

Even though scientists Williams and Struthers findings on the long term effects of exposure to RDA were not complete, they had appeared on a news special which was to follow the five o'clock news.

The five o'clock newsmen informed Tony that there would be a commercial break. Tony's attention wavered, went to his wife again. She was knitting now, knitting a blue bootie for their new son. Both Tony and his wife wanted a boy for their first born and they were always taught to think positive. Tony smiled and went back to watching the news program which had returned from its commercial break. The TV anchorman told Tony that:

"Scientist Dave Adams began his research in genetics today. After the controversy surrounding genetics in the 1970's and early 1980's, the laws were modified to encourage scientists to explore life. After years of research, Dr. Adams is hopeful about the outcome."

Dr. Adams had been watching the incubator for hours before he decided that, "a watched pot never boils." He knew the traces of life he sought would be evident within a matter of twenty-four hours. He decided to leave and not return until then. Perhaps he would go home, catch up on his reading, and watch TV. There was a special on the chemical RDA based on the research by his colleagues he didn't want to miss.

Tony did not get to see the special on the chemical RDA and its long term effects. His wife began to have contractions during the weather report. Tomorrow would be hot and sunny. The ozone advisory issued three days ago would still be in effect.

"There must be a high level of ozone today," thought Dr. Struthers as he walked to his car.

He thought of Dr. Williams then. It was Dr. Williams who first discovered that the propellents in spray cans break up the ozone layer in the earth's atmosphere. If the ozone layer had been destroyed, life as it was known would not exist.

As Tony was driving his wife to the hospital, he thought of the new life which would be with them when they returned home. When Tony reached the hospital, the doctor had rushed Tony's wife into the labor room, saying that the baby would be born tonight. Tony was happy about that.

Tony waited for his wife for a number of hours, then decided to get something to eat at the hospital cafeteria. The doctor had indicated to Tony that the birth may take some hours yet.

After he finished his meal, he went to the hospital gift shop to see if there was something he could get for his wife. While looking for the gift, his eyes rested on a box of cigars. He thought it funny for a hospital to sell cigars, a known cause of cancer. He suspected the reason tobacco continued to be sold was because of peoples reluctance to change something which worked. Tobacco companies employed people. People bought tobacco. These things continued to happen after it was found that tobacco caused cancer and other harmful diseases.

Tony read the words which were printed on the cigar box. "It's a boy!" the cigars said. Tony bought the cigars along with the gift he had chosen for his wife.

When Tony returned to his wife, he found her still in the labor room. She was sitting back trying to keep her attention on the TV above her. Everytime she would begin to relax, another contraction would creep up on her and she would tense up again.

Dr. Adams tried to keep his attention on the TV in front of him. He wanted to keep his mind off his experiment. Every time he had relaxed, the thought of his experiment would creep into his mind and he would be nervous all over again. When the special on RDA ended he turned his TV off.

Dr. Struthers glanced at his watch as he drove home. It was nine o'clock. The special he had been interviewed for was over. He was glad about that. He had been driving about for hours trying to avoid seeing that special.

The newsmen who had interviewed him, Struthers thought, had already made up his mind on what his findings should be. He wanted to hear bad news. No one actually knew what the long term effects of RDA were. However, the chemical did work and worked well.

"Why is everybody so hung up on hearing bad news?" thought Dr. Struthers. "Doesn't anybody want to hear good news anymore?"

Tony impatiently awaited the good news about the birth of his son. He was thinking positive. He was thinking positive because that philosophy worked for him.

He waited patiently while father after father had been told of his new baby. He had waited patiently while the nurses and doctors rushed to and fro from that room. Now he was getting a little impatient. "Why wouldn't time pass any faster?"

"Why won't time pass any faster?" thought Dr. Adams. There were still a number of hours left before he could determine if his experiment was a success. He decided to return to his laboratory. He wanted to be there if the chemicals became life.
Tony quickly returned from the bathroom. He wanted to be nearby in case the doctor had anything to tell him. Seconds later the doctor appeared, followed by numerous machines and nurses. He glanced momentarily at Tony as he passed. Tony watched the doctor expectantly as he passed by, but relaxed again when the doctor had said nothing.

The doctor returned within a matter of minutes. Tony stood up.

"It's a girl," the doctor stated, "but there are some complications. She has some defects in her heart."

"It is the heartbeat which will indicate if this heap of chemicals is to become life," thought Dr. Adams as he leaned over his incubator.

Mitosis had taken place and many cells were there when he returned to his lab, but this had happened in his other experiments. Usually the cells would reproduce, but would fail to reproduce in the right manner. It was the heart which usually failed first.

Tony was told by the doctor later that his little girl's heart would not fail. The crisis period was over. She was resting in an incubator now.

His little girl could have a normal life, the doctor had said, but they would have to be careful with her. Tony was happy about that, but with reservations.